



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



HAPPY 95TH BIRTHDAY!

Members of the Sioux Falls American Legion Post No. 15 gathered in Sioux Falls on Sunday, March 16, to celebrate the American Legion's 95th birthday.

Commander Ken Teunissen welcomed the guests and presented membership awards to 50, 55, 60, 65 and 70 year members. (Ret.) Brigadier General Dean Mann served as the master of ceremonies for the event.

In his keynote address SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman commended Post 15 for all of their accomplishments in this great state and their leadership in assisting South Dakota's veterans.

Secretary Zimmerman also highlighted his goals of Operation RAV—Reaching All Veterans—and encouraged all veterans to participate in the upcoming RAV open houses. Secretary Zimmerman closed with a message, "Let us walk the path of solidarity, together, forever. Let us not ever forget or quit!"



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Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dako-



ta veterans.

STAFF CHANGES AT SDDVA CLAIMS OFFICE

Bruce Dickinson has joined the SDDVA team in the claims office in Sioux Falls. Bruce is serving as a claims examiner.

Bruce served in the United States Air Force from 1978-1982. He lived in Germany for six months, England for one and a half years, and completed his Air Force service at the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center in Denver, CO. He completed his undergraduate degree in business at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley.

Bruce has been in retail management, taught business at Southeast Technical Institute for 17 years and South Dakota State University for five years. He completed his MBA at the University of Sioux Falls and Doctorate at the University of South Dakota. After another round of retail sales and management experience, Bruce is excited to return to public service with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. Serving as a Veterans Claims Examiner, Bruce will be part of a team focused on supporting South Dakota Veterans' efforts to identify and obtain benefits they've earned and are entitled too.

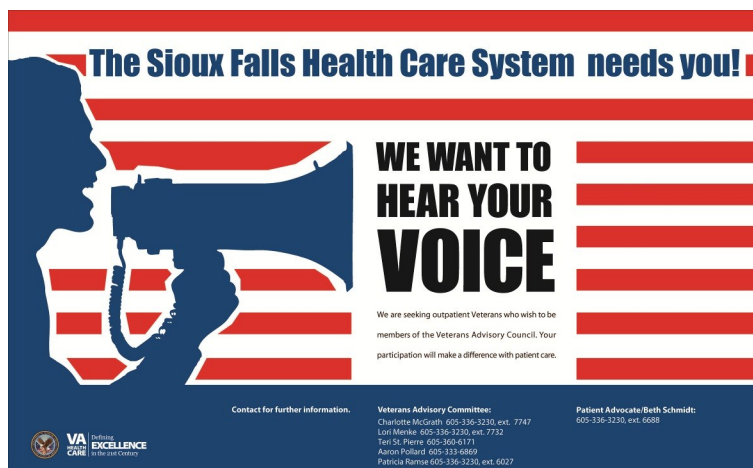
Bruce replaces Michael Maske who was recently promoted to veterans service officer.



WHEN WOMEN COME MARCHING HOME

The Sioux Falls VA (Dept. of Veterans Affairs) Health Care System invites women Veterans, their families, friends, and area residents to a complimentary viewing of the movie, *Service*. This documentary shares the stories of eight women who faced combat, survived military sexual assault, and lost brothers and sisters in frontless wars. It follows these women veterans on their journeys to understand and heal their visible and invisible wounds.

The documentary is being shown in honor of Women's History Month. It will be presented March 21 and March 27, 2014 from 12 noon – 1:00PM in the fourth floor auditorium at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center at 2501 W. 22nd Street.



SD GUARD'S 196TH MEB PARTICIPATES IN WAR FIGHTER EXERCISE

Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade participated in a war fighter exercise for their annual training March 1-14 at the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence Digital Training Facility in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

The DTF, which is an Army training site for the battle-tracking software program known as Command Post of the Future, or CPOF, provided the Sioux Falls-based 196th with required training on the digital battlefield management platform.

"We had a specific training plan that we needed to validate here, and the staff at the DTF has done a phenomenal job of helping facilitate the training required to meet that validation," said Lt. Col. Joe Eining, deputy commander of the 196th MEB.

The 196th spent four days familiarizing with digital-communication systems, including CPOF, prior to engaging in a five-day war fighter exercise, facilitated by a team of contractors assigned to the DTF.

The exercise provided the MEB a simulation of all facets of brigade-level operations in a battlefield environment, allowing the unit to fully integrate and hone their skills on the CPOF battle-tracking software.

"This war fighter exercise has introduced me to some features of CPOF I was previously unaware of," said Spc. Peter Lemons, an intelligence analyst for the 196th. "For example, we are able to toggle between various kinds of digital maps, which allows us to analyze terrain in a more effective manner. Therefore, we are able to make more informed decisions."

The software in CPOF enables users to create a common operating picture of the battlefield and use that picture to accomplish critical tasks throughout the mission.

"The CPOF allows Soldiers to communicate and share real-time plans, intelligence, schedules, notes, maps, battle-update briefings and any other battlefield-related information over a secure network," said Lt. Col. John Breyer, operation officer of the 196th MEB. "In the past, we were only able to create and share information manually within the tactical operations center. Now, we are truly a digital-brigade headquarters."

Soldiers of the 196th also received a visit from Brig.

Gen. Kevin Griese, assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG, during the exercise. Griese emphasized the importance digital-communication systems like CPOF have in today's Army.

"We must remain current and knowledgeable on the use of the digital-communication systems because they are the way of the future for the United States Army," Griese said. "We need to make sure that we remain [current] on the training requirements of these systems so that we can communicate with all of our assets throughout the mission."

The MEB will continue to enhance their digital-communication operations over the next several months as they prepare for a training evaluation at Camp Grayling, Mich., in 2015.



HEROES AMONG US

Charles A Bergeleen served in the United States Army from 1969-1971. He was awarded the Bronze Star, the Vietnam Service Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

After his service to this great country, Charles worked as a hired hand on a local farm for a period of time, then moved on to be a veterinarian assistant, served as the Register of Deeds in Jerauld County, farmed his father-in-laws farm and in 1980 started a banking career. He currently serves as the branch president of the American Trust and Savings Bank.

Charles will tell you that the most important thing learned while in service was responsibility and that any organization is only as strong as the weakest link.

Thank you Charles for your service to this great country!



HEROES AMONG US

Donald E Keeton served in the United States Army from 1943-1946 and was awarded the Bronze Star.

After service to this great country, he owned and operated a motor repair shop for several years and then owned a salvage yard in Wessington Springs.

He is currently retired and enjoying life.

Don said the most important thing he learned while in service was "How to take orders!!!!"

Thank you Don for your service to this great country!



SISSETON WAHPETON OYATE HONORS WWII CODE TALKER

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman and Field Officer Steve Oliva, and Tribal Relations Secretary J. R. LaPlante attended the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate ceremony honoring the WWII Code Talkers. Larry Goette (Roberts County CVSO), Mike Wiley (Day County CVSO) David Daberkow (Marshall County CVSO) and Gei Opsal (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate TVSO) also participated in this celebration.



Code Talkers from various tribal nations served as highly classified specialists on dangerous battlegrounds. These soldiers were so valuable to the war effort that their commanding officers were ordered to kill the Code Talkers in the event of imminent or actual capture. The Code Talkers were

aware of this added risk to their lives and continued to face that threat every day in action.

Family members of J.R. Rondell accepted the medal in his honor. In addition to the code talker honors, Korean War era veterans Naomi Barker and Yvonne Wynde were recognized for their services to this country.



VSO CONGRESSIONAL FORUM

On March 14, 2014, SDDVA Field Officer Kevin Swanson attended the VSO Congressional Forum at the VFW in Rapid City SD. After introductions, attendees updated the group on their respective projects.

Congressional staff members updated participants on current legislative efforts. Amber Heinert updated participants on the VA's caregiver support program. Stephen DiStasio, Director VA Black Hills Healthcare System updated everyone regarding improvements they are working on and have completed at Hot Springs and Ft Meade.



STATE VETERANS HOME RECOGNIZED AS EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

Saturday night during the annual Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce dinner, community leaders and employers were recognized for their continued support.

The Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home was awarded the "Employer of the Year" award. On hand to receive the award from Chamber President Wally Cachro were Tom Inman, Barb Beery, Laura Inman and Randall Meyers.

Congratulation MJFSVH Team!!!!!!



BOWEN TAKES THE PLUNGE FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

An estimated \$4,500 was raised Sunday during the annual Special Olympics Polar Plunge in Pierre.

Chuck Quinn of Oahe, Inc. says 29 brave divers took the plunge either individually or in groups. Quinn says the amount of money raised and the number of participants involved were higher than last year.

Although the entry fee is \$100, SDDVA Field Officer Kevin Bowen raised \$515 to participate in the jump. He told contributors if he raised \$500 he would wax his legs prior to the jump and wax he did!!!!!! This is Bowen's 7th year of taking the plunge in support of Special Olympics. Great Job Kevin!.



NAU RIBBON CUTTING AND DEDICATION

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman participated in the official ribbon cutting ceremony and dedication of the "Freedom Room" at the National American University in Rapid City on Thursday, March 13.

The Freedom Room is designated for military and veterans students. The room was dedicated in memory of Terry Kirkhart (USAF Retired and NAU graduate).



VIETNAM & ERA REUNION



All Veterans Are Welcome
May 2, 3, and 4, 2014

Deadwood Gulch - Deadwood, SD
304 Cliff St.- Deadwood, SD



Friday, May 2nd, Check in and evening social at the VFW

Saturday, May 3rd – Registration/Check in—State Convention Meeting—Banquet—Dance– Free time to Tour—Fund Raising Auction (all funds donated to a Veteran's cause)

Sunday, May 4th – Memorial Service

Deadwood Gulch Motel 800-695-1876/605-578-1294

Super 8 Motel 605-578-2535 & Cedar Wood Inn 605-578-2725

To receive the room rates, tell them that you are with the Vietnam Veterans Reunion.

Sponsored By Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapters #463 & #1039

Registration – Prior to 15 April, \$50 per person - \$55 at the door

Name _____ Branch of Service _____

Guest _____

Address _____

e-mail _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Confirmation of receipt to be done by e-mail.

Make all checks payable to: V.V.A.

Mail to: V V A, P.O. Box 2922, Rapid City, SD 57709-2922

For more info contact: Virgil Stockstad @ 605-716-4967 or e-mail virgil@rushmore.com
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Upcoming Events

2014

Mar. 21—Veterans Legal Services Workshop—VA Sioux Falls—4th Floor—9:00 am
 Mar. 21 VA Viewing of documentary “Service” - SFVAMC—2501 W. 22nd St.
 Mar. 27 VA Viewing of documentary “Service” - SFVAMC—2501 W. 22nd St.
 Apr. 5-6—152nd Yellow Ribbon
 Apr. 7—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am
 May 2-4—DAV State Convention—Ramkota Hotel—Aberdeen
 May 2-4 Vietnam Veterans Reunion—Deadwood Gulch
 May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis - Veterans Club, 868 Main Street—10:00 am (MT)
 May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre - American Legion, 520 S. Pierre Street—10:00 am (CT)
 May 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings - City/County Building, 520 3rd Street—10:00 am (CT)
 Jun 5-8—VFW State Convention—Custer
 Jun. 19-22—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
 Jul. 7—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am
 Aug. 6—DOL Veterans Job Fair—Augustana College Elmen Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm
 Aug. 25-29—NACVSO Training Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
 Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am

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